



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safe Kids Kansas Offers Car Seat Inspections, Safety Belt Fit Tests

February 12-18 is Child Passenger Safety Week

In observance of Child Passenger Safety Week, more than 200 Child Passenger Safety Week events will take place at Chevy and GM dealerships across the country. During the events certified CPS Technicians will teach parents and caregivers to install and adjust their car seats properly and to determine when an older child is ready to graduate from a booster seat to adult safety belts. In Kansas, check up events are being held in Kansas City, Junction City, Marion, Meade, Olathe, Osage City, Lawrence and Topeka.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading killer of children ages 1-17. "Child passenger safety is not just about babies and toddlers. It's a commitment that lasts a lifetime," says Jan Stegelman, Safe Kids Kansas coordinator. "Too many kids move from a booster seat to a safety belt before they're big enough."

In Kansas, infants and toddlers ride in safety restraints 81 percent of the time, but children ages 4-7 ride in safety restraints only 49 percent of the time. "That's an alarming difference, and it shows that many parents and caregivers are unaware of the importance of booster seats," says Stegelman.

Kids who have outgrown car seats (usually 40 pounds) are safer and more comfortable on a booster seat until they are 4'9" (57") tall and 80 pounds.

"Comfort is a factor in safety," says Stegelman. "Kids who can't sit comfortably on an adult seat are likely to slouch or squirm and move out of a safe position. That's when adult safety belts may fail to offer full protection to a small child." A booster seat positions the adult safety belt correctly and also helps a child see out the window.

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“You’ll be able to see for yourself whether your child is big enough to be safe in an adult safety belt,” says Stegelman. “Whether you bring your child to one of our checkup events to be weighed and measured and take the Safety Belt Fit Test, or learn the test and perform it at home, you can actually see whether the adult safety belt protects your child better with a booster seat.”

During CPS Week, Safe Kids Worldwide is unveiling a new Parent Toolkit to help educate kids, carpool members and other caregivers about the importance of booster seats. The kit includes:

- the Safety Belt Fit Test
- Q&A for kids talking to other kids about booster seats
- carpool safety checklists and guidelines for starting a safe carpool

Kids ages 6-8 riding on booster seats, or returning to booster seats after graduating too early to adult seats, will be invited to join the Safe Kids Spotter’s Club and look out for safe behavior from the excellent vantage point of a booster seat. Spotter’s Club activity books are also available through the Parent Toolkit.

Safe Kids Kansas chapters and coalitions provide car seat inspections throughout the year as well. To find an inspection site or certified technician near you, call 800-332-6262. Visit www.usa.safekids.org for more information about child passenger safety, including a Parent Toolkit. You can also visit www.kansassafekids.org for a calendar of upcoming scheduled events.

Safe Kids Buckle Up is a national program developed by Safe Kids Worldwide and sponsored by Chevrolet and General Motors to educate parents and caregivers about the importance of properly restraining children on every ride. The 10-year-old program has:

- inspected nearly 700,000 car seats
- held more than 15,000 car seat checkup events around the country

Safety Belt Fit Test

- ☐ Have the child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do the child’s knees bend over the front edge of the seat? Do the child’s feet touch the floor?
- ☐ Buckle the lap and shoulder belts. Does the lap belt rest on the upper legs or thighs? Does the shoulder belt rest on the shoulder or collarbone? (Never put the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back.)
- ☐ Watch the child for the length of the trip. Can the child stay seated properly with the safety belt buckled?

If you answered “no” to any of these questions, keep the child seated on a booster seat. Test again in a few months.

Child Passenger Safety Week – Safe Kids Kansas/3333

- donated more than 300,000 car seats to low-income families
- given hands-on training to more than 9 million parents and caregivers
- launched 119 Mobile Car Seat Check Up Vans — Chevy Express and Chevy Venture vans stocked with supplies and equipment to hold car seat inspections in underserved communities.

Safe Kids Kansas, Inc. is a nonprofit Coalition of 67 statewide organizations and businesses dedicated to preventing accidental injuries to Kansas children ages 0-14. Local coalitions and chapters are located in Allen, Anderson, Atchison, Clay, Dickinson, Doniphan, Douglas, Ellis, Ford, Franklin, Geary, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnson, Leavenworth, Marion, Meade, Mitchell, Montgomery, Nemaha, Osage, Pottawatomie, Republic, Rice, Riley, Saline, Smith, Shawnee, Wabaunsee, Wilson and Woodson Counties, as well as the cities of Chanute, Emporia, Leavenworth, Norton, Pittsburg, the Wichita Area and the Metro Kansas City Area. Safe Kids Kansas a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury.

www.kansassafekids.org

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